

NEIGHBORHOODS SEEK MORE SAY IN DEVELOPMENT RULES

Some neighborhood leaders are saying that the city of Eugene has not included neighborhoods enough in decisions about new property tax exemption rules for housing developments of five or more units, aka the MUPTE (Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption) program.

MUPTE is aimed at increasing the amount of multi-unit housing in order to prepare for projected population growth and it exempts developers from paying property taxes for up to 10 years. The program was suspended last year so the Eugene City Council can revise the eligibility requirements.

Neighborhood advocate Paul Conte says MUPTEs can do harm or good in a community, depending on the proposed development, and should benefit the community, not just the developer. He says the tax exemptions are public money being given away.

"It's revenue we would get if we didn't give the tax breaks," Conte says. He suggests that MUPTE be granted to low-income housing built by local developers.

Whiteaker Community Council member David Nickles says that "it's going to come down to how exactly this law is written that's going to shape what Eugene's going to look like for the next 50 years."

The city's proposed MUPTE criteria require applicants to "make an effort to contact the appropriate neighborhood association to share project information and seek input." But Nickles says that neighborhoods should be included more and earlier in the planning process for MUPTE-approved buildings.

Currently only downtown Eugene is eligible for MUPTE. The proposed changes would add MUPTE zones to west, north and south Eugene. The only MUPTE zone in the Whiteaker neighborhood would be along 6th and 7th avenues.

"Whiteaker isn't that directly affected, so we're not terrified," Nickles says. "But it could be bad for the city as a whole."

The City Council suspended MUPTE following public response to exemptions given to large student-housing complex developers Capstone and Core Campus. The suspension has been extended twice and currently has a sunset date of July 31.

South University Neighborhood Vice Chair Bill Aspegren says the City Council should have made Capstone, which received a MUPTE for the 550-unit student housing development downtown, fund a safe bike path from downtown to UO as part of the MUPTE requirements.

The City Council will meet for a work session about MUPTE at 5:30 pm Monday, June 9, at Harris Hall, 125 E. 8th Ave. — *Missy Corr*

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— PAUL CONTE,





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